

Childhood Education

**Toward Maturity as
Teachers and Parents**

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Childhood Education

For Those
Concerned
with Children

To Stimulate Thinking
Rather Than
Advocate Fixed Practice

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September: "Understanding What We Face"

October: "Knowing the Supporters of Public Schools"

November: "Clarifying Beliefs and Values"

December: "Developing Trust in Ourselves and Others"

January: "Dealing With Fear and Tension"

February: "Working Together in Schools"

March: "Working With Community Agencies"

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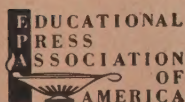
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Planning and sharing

Courtesy, Chicago Public Schools

Toward Maturity: Together

THIS IS THE FINAL ISSUE OF CHILDHOOD Education devoted to the theme: "Toward Maturity: A Midcentury Challenge." Some readers have expressed concern for the elusiveness of this theme. Is maturity a will-o-the-wisp for which we all struggle, never quite sure that we have attained it? Are there no prescriptions for growth, no formulas whereby we can test our progress? Would we not be better teachers, better parents if we had some sure means of measurement?

These are tempting ideas, particularly to those of us who tend to derive more satisfaction from "known facts" than from the contemplation of possibilities and potentialities. Realistically, however, we are forced to recognize that maturity is a quality in living which

cannot, even for purposes of assessment, be divorced from living itself.

The test of our maturity lies in our ability to get along with other people, giving and receiving, teaching and learning, working and playing *together*. The goal we set for children and for ourselves as teachers, parents, and persons is a mutuality in human relationships based on a sense of integrity and self-worth.

Such maturity is not to be had for the asking, nor does it emerge through telling. It takes both growth and experience.

Tommy, at five, is a "big" boy. He wants to go to kindergarten alone, until he stands at the threshold; then no amount of urging can loosen his tight clasp on his mother's hand. He needs the combined experience of his mother's firm faith in his eventual ability to let

go, his teacher's warm acceptance of him, his classmates challenging activities.

Miss Gray wants to let her fifth grade have more responsibility for planning. The curriculum bulletin says fifth-graders develop initiative through planning, and Miss Gray believes it. But when she thinks of herself coping with twenty-five ideas for action she is terrified.

Toward the end of the year Dick's mother stops by to say that she has heard some of the class talking about what they'd like to do for a last-day-of-school picnic. "Miss Gray, you know I believe with just a little bit of help from you those kids could plan every last detail themselves." Miss Gray listens, she ventures, the picnic is a success, and it has been teacher-pupil planned. Next year she will go further. Miss Gray has had a "maturing" experience. She has worked together with the children, supported by the parents.

Mrs. Reed—like most mothers at one time or another—is worried. She thinks her children are too "fresh." She is trying to follow "modern ideas" about discipline, but she doesn't feel her children are responding very happily. She brings up her problem in a parent discussion group. The other parents share some of her dilemmas, ask questions which set her to thinking in new ways about her children. She pays a different kind of attention to their remarks and behavior at home, talks with their teachers about the way they see the children, is relieved that they sense her concern but have evident faith in her ability to be a "good" mother.

She plans to be more consistent in what she expects from the youngsters and is both amused and pleased when one says to her, "Gee, Mom, you really mean what you say, don't you?" Sharing *together* with the other parents and planning *to-*

gether with the teachers, she has achieved new understanding with her children.

As we focus on children growing toward maturity, it is clear that both parents and teachers have their unique roles to play. Parents offer the deep love, the close emotional involvement in which good growth begins. Teachers guide in the many important learnings necessary to getting along in our culture. Each supports the other's role. Parents, knowing that they have the teachers' acceptance and confidence, find it easier to adapt to their children's changing patterns.

Teachers are dependent on parents for that very special understanding of the individual child's behavior which comes from having lived closely with him for all the days of his life. *Together* they plan the experiences calculated to help him to cope effectively with the world in which he lives. And the child has his role. He is no mere recipient of the shared concern of his parents and teacher but, as a person, makes his own unique contribution to the relationship.

THERE ARE NO EASY FORMULAS, NO precision measurements of growth toward maturity, but its progress can be seen in the relationships of people. When parents, teachers, and children work together, each increasingly aware of the other's personal worth and integrity, each developing sensitivity and responsibility toward a larger world of people, each is growing toward maturity. It is with such relationships, such evidence of growth on the part of teachers and parents that this issue of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION is concerned.—MILLIE ALMY *associate professor of child development, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio; special planning editor for this issue of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.*

AS CHILDREN VIEW US

The passing of years and an understandable forgetfulness may have dimmed our memory of a child's viewpoint. To help us toward greater understanding of children, Aleyne Clayton Haines, lecturer in education, Queens College, Flushing, New York, brings us the results of a number of research studies aimed at discovering how boys and girls look at us—their teachers and their parents—and at the schools and homes which we maintain.

INCREASING EMPHASIS, PARTICULARLY IN the area of social psychology, is being placed on the idea that an individual responds to situations *as he sees them*, in light of his own personality, his past experiences, his values. Each person brings meaning to the outer situation and interprets it in terms of his own particular needs and purposes. Thus, the same situation is seen in different ways by different people. This is an aspect of individual differences that has been, in large measure, neglected.

Teachers and parents have long recognized the fact that no two children are alike and that these differences must be taken into account in guiding growth. Too little importance has been attached to individual differences in perception: the ways in which situations are seen by children, the *meaning* these situations have for them, the way in which they interpret actions of adults. A child's concept of himself develops as he interacts with those around him and he forms an opinion of the kind of person he is when he sees how others regard him.

Bewildering Standards

It has been assumed in many instances that imposing adult standards—moralizing, for example, about what is a nice way to act or what is not a nice way to

act—will convey the meaning to a child that it has for an adult. Frequently, it is found that the same meaning is not conveyed, that while there may be surface conformity, a child's basic attitudes and feelings indicate little or no change in the desired direction.

While adults mean well, they sometimes forget that a child's lack of experience keeps him from understanding the aims of their behavior. He is, quite often, not seeing the situation in the way an adult is seeing it. He is seeing it in terms of his own needs and purposes and in light of his past experiences.

Holding up standards of failure or success may be intended as an incentive (by an adult) but may be interpreted by a child to mean personal unworthiness or may result in unrealistic aspirations. Meting out rewards and punishments, praise and criticisms, without careful consideration of the significance they hold for the particular child in question may have a deterring effect on attitudes toward self and thus on self-direction. It is important in thinking together as parents and teachers to be aware of the child's viewpoint in order that planning for his interests may be most effective.

Clues as to differing perceptions may be identified in a number of ways. Remarks made by children in informal

situations often provide anecdotal material that over a period of time discloses their attitudes and feelings. Expressions of wishes and expectations sometimes are displayed in stories written by children or in drawings. Attitudes not verbalized, often unrecognized by children themselves, can be inferred from their behavior reactions.

Let us examine some of the ways in which children look at parental-child relationships, teacher-child relationships, and classroom situations.

Children Look at Parents

Parental attitudes have a profound influence in the child's early formative years and are basic in determining how a child will see himself and the world. In turn, these concepts will determine the ways in which a child will attempt to meet his needs and solve his problems.

Radke,¹ in an intensive investigation of pre-school children's perception and behavior, found that children thought of parents as rightful authorities and were dependent upon them for standards of "good" and "bad" behavior. There were some differences in parent perception and child perception in the disciplinary area. Parents' reports about themselves were more favorable than children's evaluations.

Although fathers and mothers reported similar behavior toward the child, there were contrasts in their roles as perceived by the child, with mothers punishing more frequently, but fathers more severely. Children's free association about their fathers and mothers were more heavily weighted with descriptions about work and activities than with emotional relationships. The results also indicate that the child takes over in his own be-

havior with other children the behavior of the parent.

A Child's Home-School Relations

Children come to school with many preconceived ideas and attitudes. A parent in making remarks to a neighbor about school and teachers or in discussing school progress with older children may be unaware that she is forming a picture of school in her child's mind. Sometimes the picture is built up consciously.

Stendler and Young² from interviews with mothers of first-graders found that most of the children regard first-grade entrance as an important event which is anticipated with some eagerness. They have had a great deal of information, and some misinformation, about school prior to entrance. Most of these parents seemed to present a picture of school as a pleasant place and of teacher as a kind person. However, there were some instances in which school was held up as a threat. Children were made to feel that they would have to change their ways, once under the influence of the teacher.

Even when the home is attempting to provide a receptive attitude toward school, the event may be seen as a threatening one to some children, particularly if the parents' own anxieties and uncertainties are tied up with the situation. Instances are familiar to first-grade teachers wherein over-anxious parents produce a withdrawing-from-pressure reaction in youngsters. As one parent puts it:

I can't understand the way Sally acts. I've tried and tried to make her see that she should love to go to school, that she will learn to read and write like the other boys and girls, that she's a big girl now, and it's time for her to get away from Mamma. Yet she

¹Radke, Marian J. *The Relation of Parental Authority to Children's Behavior and Attitudes*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1946. Pp. 108.

²Stendler, Celia B., and Young, Norman. "The Impact of Beginning First Grade Upon Socialization as Reported by Mothers." *Child Development*, December 1950. 21: 241-260.

keeps on crying and doesn't want to leave home. It gets me so upset I am in tears, too, every morning.

Attitudes about the school and teachers are often communicated to children when not verbalized. If a parent comes to school only when some difficulty arises, if the sole means of home-school relationship is by way of an occasional report card, it is quite likely that a child will view this relationship as comprising two distinct forces both playing important roles yet maintaining separate identity. He then becomes a mediator.

Parents and teachers find it difficult to work toward common purposes when relying on the "translation" given by the child. Through the child's eyes, teachers build up concepts of what the parent must be like. And parents build up pictures of the kind of person the teacher is. Many times when the two get together they find their "pictures" of each other change considerably.

Teachers, too, not well-acquainted with some parents, unwittingly color the feelings of children through surface reactions to remarks about the home. Although the remarks are often innocent enough in themselves, children's *perception* of them may bring forth feelings of shame, inferiority, self-depreciation. Mental hygienists tell us that it is more dangerous when such feelings are repressed and unrecognized.

Contrast these situations with those in which a child sees that there is an harmonious relationship between teacher and parent. This may occur in some years of his school life and not in others. Some children remark: "You like my mother, don't you?" or, "You and my teacher are friends, aren't you?" in a way that indicates security derived from knowledge that they are accepted as persons and are being helped in the best way.

Children Look at Teachers

Teachers confronted with a class of children who do have varying attitudes and expectations are concerned with the effect of their own values and teaching procedures. From a study conducted by Biber and Lewis³ there is evidence that the atmosphere created by the teacher and the children does have some influence in developing positive constructive values. Exploring the expectations of first-grade children by means of pictures and story explanations of school incidents, the experimenters found that children's perceptions were realistic in some areas, that is, their responses reflected a good deal of the teacher's actual methods and programs.

However, in the areas of good behavior and punishment, there were notable unrealistic responses which seemed to represent projection of feelings from home experiences or underlying anxiety or both. The fact that even a small group expect the teacher to be unsympathetic, feel cut off from adult comfort, and are ready to take blame on themselves, is of importance. It is pointed out that children may not absorb all realities with the same readiness.

A Look at Classroom Situations

As part of a recent research study, the writer presented anecdotal situations in individual interviews with third-grade children who had been working in problem-solving committees in the same classroom. The stories were written to represent conflicts similar to those arising in the class activities. The children were asked to interpret the stories, to tell what they thought would happen, what the teacher would do, and how other children on the committee would react to them.

³ Biber, Barbara, Lewis, Claudia. "An Experimental Study of What Young School Children Expect from Their Teachers." *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, Vol. 40, 1949. Pp. 3-97.



Photo, Bill Hedrich, Chicago

Teacher and children plan together

When the stories were read to the children, boys' names were used with boys and girls' names were inserted for girls. A few specific examples from the original data follow:

Story (when a difference in opinion occurs)

This committee is studying about trains. Members are talking with the teacher about the new streamline engines that can pull lots of railroad cars. Charles (Margaret) says, "It takes two engines to pull a long train." George (Evelyn) says, "No, that's not right; the new engines are strong enough to pull the train by themselves." Charles (Margaret) says, "No, they're not." George (Evelyn) says, "Yes, they are, too."

Child 1: They'd get mad at each other. The one that said two engines was probably right. They'd start fighting.

Question: What about the other boys and girls?

Reply: They'd try to make up friends.

Question: What about the teacher?

Reply: She'd tell both of them to quit the committee.

Question: Is there anything else?

Reply: She might send them in the cloakroom or in the hall or to the principal's office.

Child 2: The teacher comes and says,

"Well, let's find out. Does anybody know anybody who works on trains?" Evelyn says, "I do, my father works on trains and he says they have one engine."

Question: What would the teacher say?

Reply: Evelyn, be sure about that; ask him tonight. Then the teacher would say, "Margie, do you know anybody?" Margie would say, "No, I don't." Then the teacher would say, "Well, let's let Evelyn find out." The next day Evelyn says, "I found out that sometimes they have two or three engines."

Question: And then what?

Reply: Evelyn would say, "I'm sorry, I thought it was one, but I found out they have more."

Here are two children in the same classroom under the guidance of the same teacher but with quite different expectations. One seems to emphasize personal conflict and antagonism, expecting the teacher to resort to punitive measures as a way of settling differences of opinion. The other, presented with the same situation, works out a cooperative settlement, with the teacher as a friendly guide, encouraging children to turn to proper sources for information.

How much these expectations are a

reflection of attitudes toward adults in general or are indications of personality factors has not been established. At any rate, these children seem to be reacting to different psychological environments although in the same surroundings.

Democratic Ways With Children

It is generally conceded that democratic techniques should be employed in working with children and that their daily living should encompass many opportunities to practice the essential tenets of our philosophy. There is some evidence that the techniques, in and of themselves, are not sufficient to accomplish desired results.

In examining patterns of parent behavior with their resulting effects on children, Baldwin and others⁴ have identified two prerequisites of democracy in the home: maturity of the emotional relationship between parent and child and

the adoption of democratic methods of child management. It is emphasized that approved techniques must be accompanied by underlying emotional attitudes that are compatible, if they are not to do more harm, frequently, than good.

This concept might be applicable also to classroom techniques and home-school relations. Going through the motions, as it were, of democratic decisions without the appropriate basic feeling tones may well defeat the purposes which are intended.

We do not expect that children will always see the situation as it appears to adults. But perhaps by being aware of their point of view, we can come to a closer understanding of them. As we work together—parents and teachers who are concerned with providing the best possible experiences for all children—let us not forget to look at ourselves, the ways in which we work, our own human relations, and to consider how these may appear as children view us.

⁴ Baldwin, Alfred L., Kalhorn, Joan, Breese, Fay Huffman, "Patterns of Parent Behavior," *Psychological Monographs*, Vol. 58, No. 3, 1945. Pp. 75.

Maturity for Teachers and Parents

By HOWARD LANE

As grown-ups endeavoring to help children toward greater maturity, we need to be sure that we ourselves are mature individuals. A few of the obstacles along the path toward maturity and some of the goals we seek are discussed by Howard Lane of the School of Education, New York University.

"TO BE ALLOWED TO TEACH CHILDREN should be the sign of final approval of a society."¹ In our time the fundamental purpose of the school is the rearing of

grown-up people who can realize their human potentiality for living richly and productively by cooperation through intelligence.

We must learn to create conditions for good living, not merely suffer fortuitous

¹ Chisholm, C. B. "The Psychiatry of Enduring Peace and Social Progress," *Psychiatry*, Vol. 9, 1946. Pp. 1-44.

circumstance. We must learn to make goodness of mass production, jet planes, the controlled release of atomic energy, and television. Thus, we must mature to the point of knowing that the "common good" is identical with the individual's good, that all improvement in the condition of man has resulted from improved skills in cooperation and the abandonment of predatory behavior. The growing of mature citizens is the principal work of homes, neighborhoods, and schools.

Children assume the dominant characteristics of the people with whom they grow. Growing among people who speak good French, even the dull learn to speak French well; growing among fearful people, children grow into fearful, anxious persons. Emotionally mature personalities develop only among emotionally maturing personalities.

Maturity is a process, not a condition. "Being one's age"—an important cliché among adolescents a few years ago—is a process of change. The mature personality behaves in ways appropriate to his developing capacities, learning, concerns, responsibilities, and to the limitations of his capacities and circumstances.

Learning to "Know Thyself"

Let us examine some of the more commonly emphasized aspects of maturity. "Know thyself" is a cardinal direction for growth. We do not expect a toddler to know about digestion and vitamins; he has a "built-in" knowledge that he needs food. We wonder about grown-ups who are finicky about their food. We suffer in the presence of the adult ambitious to play the violin and lacking discernment for pitch.

Not only must we know ourselves, but we must like ourselves. We now

know the errors of the past in shaming children for doing what comes naturally. Many adults experience acute difficulty in accepting the fact that they are creatures. Essential biological functions are serious emotional problems.

The association of naughtiness and sin with the functioning of the body is immature at any age. Sex behavior is a serious problem to most people despite its central role in the attainment of the biological destiny of the individual and the continuance of the race. It is a problem because we have sought the economically necessary delay of the attainment of its purpose by restraint, fears and preachments, and punishment rather than by good sense and foresight.

Anyone who undermines a child's self-respect, stunts his personal growth. Self-respect is the core of mental health. Much of current emphasis upon parental responsibility for children's behavior seriously damages their respect for themselves, and greatly handicaps the development of parents and their children.

Fitting Into Life

The maturing personality grows in his understanding of life and in his increasing ability to manage his own life. Fatalism is the ultimate denial of maturity. Healthy personal growth is growth toward independence, toward skill and confidence in making decisions.

Life does just happen to an infant. He takes life as it comes. Maturing is growth in the skills and disposition to be responsible for one's own living, to make choices, alter circumstances, engage in constructive effort to improve one's lot. Children denied opportunity to make plans and choices can scarcely grow in this aspect of living.

Wise parents and teachers welcome the growing disposition of a child to

accept responsibility for living his own life. Regimentation of children, employees, citizens may make the life of the regimenters more serene and even more productive from the short view; it does not permit maturity.

The Will to Cooperate

The growing up of civilization, indeed individual personal living, today requires continued growth of the ability and disposition to cooperate. We are just now becoming commonly aware of the fact that all distinctively human behavior is socially derived and socially directed. Infants are not punished by mature parents for biting mother or even for awakening daddy at four in the morning. But, infants have the capacity to grow into beings who can sense the feelings and conditions of other people and accept responsibility for them.

Civilization is possible only as most people place the common good above their own; the human personality reaches its highest fruition in productive concern for the well-being of other people. The attainment of a nice and appropriate balance between being captain of one's soul and subverting one's immediate interests to the common good is one of life's most delicate adjustments.

Living together requires flexibility in demands and behavior. The ability to make productive compromises is an important function of maturity. We need to clarify our confusion between compromise and hateful appeasement. Certainly the brittle person is not mature.

It seems appropriate at this point to consider the waste in human concern which stems from widespread disposition to place blame for unpleasant circumstances. "Who done it?" is all too often the core of concern, when the real prob-

lem is how did this come to pass and what do we need to do to correct it?

Seeing Life As It Is

The crucial problem of maturity is that of seeing life as it is, of seeing one's own circumstances clearly, of accepting or altering circumstances by intelligent choice and planning rather than by resorting to hopeless acceptance, wasteful compensations, extravagant diversions.

All of us are greatly reduced in efficiency and happiness by refusal to face life as it is, to deal with our problems with perspective and with intelligence. For example; to many young people, the birth of a child necessitates a marked change in their way of living. Mother must stop work; income is sharply reduced. The small apartment adequate for two becomes overcrowded; expenses increase. Parties, trips, amusements are greatly curtailed. The demand of a little child for care is constant; freedom is greatly diminished.

If these problems are not squarely faced in an attitude of good sportsmanship and in the long view of the gratifications of family life, parents may escape them by neglect and unconcern, or express aggressions toward the child in sharp control, punishments, demands for cleanliness, scholarship, even in imposed lessons in dancing, music, the arts.

The teacher who grew up in fear of displeasing (hurting) mother, of incurring the wrath of father, finds difficulty in accepting the coordination, help, and direction of principals and supervisors. The professions abound in unhappy persons who treat their leaders as they long ago wished to be able to treat their dominating parents.

We need especially to accept our feelings as being real and valid. The term *should* has no validity in the realm of

feeling. If, however, we find ourselves unduly irked, or anxious, or weary in some circumstance, we are wise to raise the problem to conscious level, analyze the circumstance, identify the causes and accept the condition as unalterable, not worth the price of alteration, or make specific plans for change and carry them through.

We stunt personal growth in children with admonition to be a *good* boy, without reference to the good to be done. "Nice little sisters *always* love each other" is a paralyzing admonition to one whose sister is a stinker now and then. "Don't ever contradict your teacher" harms the pupil whose teacher has gaps in his knowledge and wisdom.

Perhaps some notes on evidences of immaturity and of common hazards in the process of maturity would be appropriate here. Uneven maturity is more devastating to mental health and to one's associates than is level immaturity. We frequently encounter very "bright" children who fear the normal play of tots. We know adults who carry on high level jobs with marked efficiency, yet cry and swear, yell and get "hurt" at home folks as might be normal at age two.

These Are the Signs

Let us define a few of the more important diagnostic signs of immaturity:

Emotional outbursts—crying, pouting, being hurt, storming, telling people off, striking, spanking the children—all result from lack of adequate response to situations demanding response.

Prejudice is the immature judging of persons and situations by irrelevant factors or without evidence. Race prejudice maintained contrary to abundant knowledge is virtue in many parts of the world. It is a glaring immaturity. Extremely immature personalities can hold

belief contrary to fact throughout life.

The ability and disposition to avoid seeing unpleasant facts characterize the immature. Some people can serenely teach the beauties of nature in an atmosphere of ugliness and neglect. I have known eloquent lecturers on democracy who rigidly controlled their families.

Far too many parents, teachers, foremen, tycoons cripple other people by the exercise of the immature emotional necessity to be master when one is elsewhere a slave. The man of prestige and authority who finds gratification in subjecting, surpassing, defeating other people is most devastating to an interdependent people who must cooperate. There are immature demagogues among us who would apply the term Americanism to this burdensome maladjustment. Mature Americans resent and resist them.

We are gaining rapidly. Can we accelerate our gains enough to prevent the explosion of our world? The full might of the professional maturity of the world's teachers can gain us time to rear enough grown-up people to solve the distressing strain of the uneven maturing of the people of our world. Let us not fiddle on the tightened strings of our own immaturities while the pent-up energies of unsolved problems destroy us and our children.

We need not be immaturally anxious about rearing mature children. As teachers, parents, neighbors, and children live together in mature respect for the dignity of each other, all will grow together. We elders must reflect upon the extent of our right to impose our burdens and preferences upon the young. Age is mentioned in none of man's great declarations of human dignity. Children need grown-ups. The one dependable fountain of youth is continued active friendship and communication with children.

If Parents Could Choose

Students in a teaching seminar in San Francisco State College asked a group of parents two questions: (1) What kind of a teacher does your child need? and (2) How can teachers help you with the job of bringing up your child? Jerome G. Disque, with the help of data furnished by the students, brings us results of this unusual survey. Mr. Disque is instructor, Division of Education and Psychology, San Francisco State College, California.

IT HAS LONG BEEN AXIOMATIC IN GOOD schools to say that parents should be co-partners in the education of their children. Such sharing invites parents to work with teachers in helping children develop purposeful lives at school, in the home, and in the community. Alerting the child to individual interests in his daily world affairs and helping him achieve a balanced physical-emotional maturity are two of the most important educational objectives that should receive careful attention on both the school and home fronts.

The involvement of adults in such a common task, however, has seldom given parents a chance to evaluate the kind of teaching which they have found most valuable in helping their children attain these goals. More to the point, perhaps, parents have hardly ever been asked what kind of teacher they would select for their children.

It has been common practice in schools to ask children to evaluate their educational experiences, including the teacher's part in their daily achievements. It is only fair to assume that parents should be given a similar opportunity in the educational partnership. They, too, should be allowed to identify the kinds of experiences and qualities of teaching that they have found most helpful for the cooperative venture upon

which children, teachers, and other adults are embarked in our schools.

A group of student teachers at San Francisco State College, therefore, set out to discover some common adult reactions to a few simple questions about the education of children in the public schools. Seventy-three parents were interviewed by these students, and two basic questions were asked of each mother and father. First, each parent was asked, "What kind of a teacher does your child need?" This question was followed by a second, "How can teachers help you with the job of bringing up your child?"

In answering the first question, parents were encouraged to state their opinions frankly about the teacher's professional ability and personality traits that were thought to be most desirable. In response to the second question, mothers and fathers were asked specifically about the kind of information most helpful to them in interpreting their child's behavior.

The Teacher as a Person

Taking the group as a whole, it is clear that today's parent wants a teacher who is a real person. Little disagreement was found among the collective ideas regarding the teacher as a person or the kinds of relationships between teacher and student which these parents thought to be most valuable.

Here, for example, are typical comments made by a group of fathers who are members of a "Dad's Club" in one elementary school. It is interesting to note that these men would have little to do with the stereotyped schoolmarm which they possibly knew as youngsters in school. "Teachers should not be afraid of us," one father remarked rather confidently. "They should be real people." Others said, "Teachers should be interested in what they are doing . . . should like little children . . . should be emotionally stable . . . have a feeling of security."

Discussion of "real people" brought the fathers to the teacher's personal life. They thought that it was a fine thing, for instance, to have married teachers in the classroom—"mothers, themselves, who really understand little children." One father quickly qualified this remark by saying that "teachers don't *have* to be married, however. The main thing is that they should really like youngsters." "And we should not expect teachers to be unnaturally stiff or too formal," another man added.

Mothers, too, echoed the same feelings about teachers as real people. "We want teachers to be human," one said. A chorus of voices confirmed this feeling. Some mothers thought it was important for teachers to be "mature . . . patient . . . thoughtful." Others felt that teachers should have "imagination . . . a rich variety of personal interest . . . a creative way of doing things with young children."

Both fathers and mothers also found agreement about the qualities of teaching which they did *not* like. "Harshness . . . sarcasm . . . bullying . . . favoritism . . . and indifference" were a few of the negative aspects of teaching they felt should have no place in the classroom.

Professional educators can find little wrong with the picture of the ideal teacher painted by almost all of these parents. If any barriers between teachers and parents do exist, it must be because disagreement is found in other aspects of the alliance which the school has with the home. The clues to such disagreements, it was found through these interviews, are found in the ways that parents see their own children in a school situation.

A Clash of Ideals

Although educators will agree with these parents in their concept of the ideal teacher, certain adult opinions were contradictory to this ideal when the mothers and fathers began to talk about "what my child needs in school." It is important for teachers to examine some of those contradictions if they want to help parents achieve a clear understanding of the common job with which both school and home are vitally concerned.

Most mothers and fathers seemed to obviate the very qualities of "understanding" and "kindness" in teaching when they thought about the kinds of help for their particular children that the school could give. One mother commented, "I want a teacher who will make my child work." Another parent wanted a teacher who "understands children" but, in the same breath, added, "one who will give my child more arithmetic and spelling." Mothers asked for "sympathetic" teachers, but they also wanted "the kind of person who will make our children study."

Faced with these contradictions, teachers are often confused. The inherent principles of child growth and development, to begin with, deny a drill-master approach to learning. Yet, teachers must first clarify a contradiction

such as this if they are to establish relationships that are "kind" and "sympathetic" with children in school.

"My Boy" Needs to Succeed

Several points of reference have emerged from these interviews that may help teachers understand the parent's point of view. The first of these is a type of ego-involvement between parent and child which explains the psychological setting for many of the discrepancies among views held in the home and the school philosophy.

A better understanding of this close family bond should give teachers insight into the sense of failure which parents feel when their children fail in school. This ego-bond translates such failure into a threat which was reflected in a mother's remark when she said, "I am only called to school when my child does something bad," or in the father's question, "Doesn't my boy ever do anything *well* in school?"

The teacher who understands the ego-involvement between parent and child will help her students have happy, successful experiences to take home with them after the school day has ended. Of course, teachers cannot avoid explaining failures of the child to fulfill potentialities of which he is capable. The wise teacher, however, can help the parent see that his child's failure is not a threat but rather a problem that must be worked out by both the school and the home.

Parents hate to fail as mothers and fathers. Their success is usually seen in terms of the desirable outcome achieved by their children in school. The school must make sure, therefore, that each child has satisfying experiences which will give him the security he needs so much to achieve maturity.

Teachers are not always able to report successful experiences for each child as

it is often the parents themselves who set impossible standards for children to meet. For the most part, these standards are concerned with attainment of academic skill in the three R's. Parental expectations are set so high that failure is inevitable in many cases.

Seeing Learning as a Whole

Mothers and fathers who mentioned "standards," "homework," "good work habits," and "the ability to concentrate" as desirable outcomes for their children in school referred, in the main, to academic skills. "Drill is necessary," a mother remarked, "and teachers should not shirk their duty to give our children plenty of practice in the fundamentals."

"If only my daughter could have more special attention, I am sure she would do better in arithmetic," a father commented. One mother even felt that the teacher was "prejudiced" against parents who wanted their children to read well "because, in spite of what we say, she doesn't seem to give the class enough work in this subject."

This criticism of modern education cannot be dismissed lightly. These parents who felt the need for more "drill" thought that the request was quite justified. It was their opinion that the kind of "fundamentals" which children need to face life successfully are the real wharp and woof of the curricular pattern. "Theories of child development are fine," this type of parent says, "But it is not a very realistic approach in giving our children what they really need."

Teachers must help parents understand the total development of the child if the three R's are to be put in their proper perspective by the layman. Guidance of this sort is badly needed from professional people if the public is to accept the modern classroom environ-

ment as a much more realistic approach to learning than the screwed-down desks and McGuffey readers of another generation.

Once laymen understand the basic principles upon which modern education is founded, the curriculum ceases to be separated into "frills" and "fundamentals" in their minds. The parent who sees his child doing arithmetic examples for practice on the one hand or counting eggs in a basket on the other can understand that both ways of learning number relationships are equally valid. "Painting" and "basket-weaving" become important adjuncts to the child's development instead of "nice, but unimportant things which my child does in school," as one parent commented.

The careful explanation of child development and psychologies of learning is not always an easy task no matter how skillfully it is handled by the teacher. There are cultural pressures in our society that often contradict the inherent principles upon which a democratic learning environment is established. The idea that social mobility can be achieved through the education ladder only adds to the threat that parents feel when their children are unsuccessful in school. Such pressures often motivate parental desire for comparative ratings such as marks and competitive grades.

"I want to know how my child compares in his grades with other children in the class," was the comment of one mother who was asked how teachers could help her best. Frequent requests for a child's I. Q. reflected the same desire of mothers and fathers to have "a bright child who will get ahead." Dissatisfaction with children's report cards, using terms such as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory," when traced down, was usually caused by a desire for speci-

fic grades based on competitive work in the classroom. This desire, naturally, was strongest among parents who thought they had "bright children."

As long as social or financial success implies that the road to fame can be achieved by getting good grades in school, this cultural pressure exerted on teachers by parents will exist. A competitive society furnishes constant examples of successful men and women who were "bright" in school. Little mention is made of the scholar who failed in life or the average student who succeeded.

Parents Are Human, Too

These, then, are the points at which obvious contradictions exist when parents view the curriculum. Wariness of "progressive methods" using such devices as "group work," "reading readiness," or "activity programs" creates misunderstanding among adults that blocks good human relations between teacher and parent. If the kinds of things that parents want for their children are re-examined, one cannot help but be impressed with the basic good sense in the thinking of most adults.

"Kind," "sympathetic," and "understanding," it will be recalled, were the terms used by parents to describe the kind of person a teacher should be. Teachers often forget these qualities when dealing with parents. If parent problems are individualized much in the same way that the child's problems are given individual attention in the classroom, teachers can gain more understanding of the reasons behind the thinking of many adults.

The virtues of "sympathy" and "understanding," moreover, must be communicated to parents, too, if basically sound human relations are to result. "Parents are very human," one success-

ful classroom teacher remarked, "and I should hate to become a dusty, old schoolmarm in my relations with mothers and fathers. I would much rather be their confidant and friend."

"Could it be that modern professional workers, unthinkingly, have not wiped off the chalk dust or let loose the pointer stick long enough to erase from parents' minds the picture of "teacher" that many of them must have scrawled on the schoolhouse fence? Could it be that teachers have not thought too much about the threat or cause for concern carried home in the typical "note from school"?"

These are fundamental questions that must be answered before sound human relations can become a part of the parent-

teacher bond. Mature children need mature parents. Such maturity can only be reached if teachers help adults clarify their thinking about what is best for each individual child in the family.

Professional sensitivity to parental problems will make it easier for fathers, mothers, teachers, and children to cross and re-cross the threshold of the community school in search of solutions to problems which are common to all of them. Teachers who have a deep understanding of these very human problems and contradictions that exist in the minds of many parents are the "kind" and "sympathetic" people whom most adults would pick for teaching—"if parents could choose."

We Follow Children's Leads

By LUBA DINKIN

It is easy enough to say that one needs to "follow children's needs," but it is sometimes hard to know how and where to start. Luba Dinkin, educational director, Beth Hays School, New York, tells us that the children themselves furnish the best guide to this approach. Many examples from actual school practice illustrate the author's viewpoint.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE CHILD IN THE process of growth is being recognized more and more. The phenomena we observe in this early stage of human development are so specific that they tend to be overlooked and misinterpreted. Many of the manifestations of children's

growth seem to us just "childish," but they have a deep, special significance that has to be understood.

The curriculum should be built on a deep understanding of the essential needs of the particular group of children, taking into consideration their homes. In this way, the "school" starts and ends somewhere beyond the school walls.

Following children's leads involves very careful planning. The curriculum cannot be rigid and static because the child in the growth process is in a constant change. We provide first-hand experiences and watch the reactions to them as they bring new interests. Real under-

standing of children, of their "own" interests and needs, can only develop in an environment that allows the children unlimited opportunity to expand. Limited opportunity blocks the expression of real interest.

When Children Make Discoveries

A teacher and her group took a boat trip around Manhattan. The most astonishing thing to the children was the realization that, "Manhattan is an island!" Perhaps they had heard this fact, but now they had an opportunity to discover it for themselves. Through this experience the teacher got an insight into what was important to the children.

The teacher learns from following the direction of the child's interest and his way of accepting and digesting the bombardment of impressions, information, and feelings in connection with his environment. The kind of school that tries to appreciate the personality of the child and accept him finds a wonderful reward in the demonstration of potentialities that were hitherto hidden. It tries to give the child the opportunity to initiate and to explore.

It is interesting to see how the child discovers through his own experiences laws of nature or of social relationships. How stimulating it is for him to learn to be a creator and leader instead of always a follower!

Here is part of the conversation of four-year-olds who were painting for the first time with oil paints. The voices were high-pitched and excited:

This is sticky paint. . . . It's sticky, sticky. It's sticky red paint. It's sticky red glue. The workers will have to scrape it off.

It's real paint; we're going to paint the whole day; when it's dry, we'll put more paint on.

When we paint a house, we'll still paint it red.

Only red.

Even a house, we'll paint red.

Charles: Painters don't talk while they're painting. They have to see what they're doing, or they'll paint themselves.

Frank: The paint is only shiny when it's wet.

This fragment of conversation was overheard among five-year-olds in the midst of boat play:

Robert: (*Paints the boat with water.*) Wood cracks from water. Isn't it silly? Look! Wood cracks from water. Isn't it funny? Yes, I am going to clean this boat. I put the brush with soap because I am going to clean this. I am going to clean this boat.

Jimmy: It might be a motor boat. Ha. Ha. Isn't it funny?

Robert: Isn't this a nice sized light for the boat? (*Holds the brush.*)

Jimmy: It isn't a light.

Robert: You can't light me up. (*Laughs.*)

Jimmy: You be the weather bureau? All right?

Robert: Lightning storm coming out. I will wash it up, wash it up, wash it up. You know what? Yes, but I am the weather bureau.

David: What is the weather bureau?

Robert: Lightning storms and cloud out of the West, out of the West. (*Puts lights out.*) Lightning storm. (*Puts lights on.*)

David: Lightning storm.

In our school children visited each other's homes. The child saw his classmate's house, his family, his room, his toys. These visits brought the child and his family much closer to the school; they enlarged the experiences of the children about their homes and introduced them to the acceptance of differences.

We Visit Parents at Work

From this experience, the sevens started a new reaching-out process on a larger scale. It started with a suggestion of one of the children to visit her father who was working in a building one block away from school. Arrange-

ments were made, and the father played host to the group.

The children started a discussion of their parents' occupations. It was decided to visit each of the parents in turn, and see him at work. These visits to the offices of their fathers included a large variety of occupations, people, places, processes. It turned out finally as a source of tremendous learning and also brought the parents, particularly the fathers, nearer to the children.

The places visited included an art studio, a factory for baby clothes, an import house for jewelry and clocks, dress shops, the Jewish Agency, a riding academy, a court, the display room of electric trains, a pharmaceutical association, a university, a clothing factory, and a wholesale tire company.

One lawyer arranged a visit to a courthouse. Judging from the children's conversation on the bus after the court visit, the expedition was a success:

Billy: It was the best visit.

Jane: I wouldn't say the best. Just different. If every father would be the same, it wouldn't be interesting for us.

The fathers and other persons interviewed were impressed with the seriousness of the children's interest, the questions which they asked, and their memory for details.

The fathers, some of whom had been skeptical of the visits in the beginning, emerged from this experience with a feeling of pride that made them eager to show their child and his group to the people with whom they worked. After

the trip to a tire company, the father called the school and said that he hadn't known that his job was so interesting.

The fathers also sensed the pride of their children in showing the group the things that were connected with their father's work. It was deeply significant and important for the child to look through the eyes of the group, and the interest of the group had a deeper meaning. One very withdrawn child, at the end of a visit, ran back and jumped and hugged and kissed her father over and over.

In one case, they visited a mother instead of a father. The mother told this account:

Irene: Mommy, I have an idea. How about bringing the group to your office?

Mrs. Taylor: It isn't my office.

Irene: Why don't you speak to your boss?

Mrs. Taylor: I don't know if I could see a group of children walking around his office.

Irene: Well, Mommy, if you could have the group come to your office, I would have something to talk about, because I can't have them at Daddy's office.

The visit was arranged, and as it turned out, it actually brought the mother into a better relationship with her employer; he never fails to ask about the daughter.

The training of the teacher in this kind of school goes in the direction of a deep appreciation of a child as a person with his own purposes. It isn't easy for us to change from a role of a walking encyclopedia to the role of a person who finds out, with the children, about the children, and even about himself.

WE NEED TO CAPTURE THE VISION, THE PURPOSE, THE WILL TO WORK for an enlightened world and to stimulate action—strong, vigorous and good—for children. WINIFRED E. BAIN, 1951 ACEI Study Conference, Seattle, Washington.

A Community Plans a Nursery School

Here is the inspiring account of community enthusiasm and industry which led to the forming of a cooperative nursery school. It illustrates outstanding teamwork among parents, teachers and other interested citizens. Elizabeth Woods, formerly supervisor of guidance and counseling in Los Angeles City Schools, is currently undertaking an eight-month assignment with the staff of the Far East Command as "educational expert in the field of pupil guidance."

THIS IS THE STORY OF A COMMUNITY project in nursery education which has helped to solve a problem which now concerns parents all over our land—how to secure the advantages of an educationally approved nursery school for their pre-school children and continuous learnings for themselves.

Sierra Madre is a small California community of 7,200 population. Its cultural level is well above average as is attested both by the initiative and intelligence of the small group of mothers who conceived the idea of community responsibility for young children and the cooperation of leading citizens who have given enthusiastic support to the project.

An Idea Begins to Grow

The mothers, several of whom had had college training in nursery education, wanted to provide such education, not only for their own children, but for all nursery age children of the community whose parents desired this kind of experience for their offspring. These mothers began talking to personal friends and to community leaders about the idea and possibilities of its implementation. Finding enthusiasm and encouragement, they next sought out as advisor and director of the proposed project a woman who had for years been a leader in nursery

education and director of a school in Los Angeles. Her advice as to organization was invaluable. Not only were her training and experience exceptional, but so were her administrative ability, her knowledge of pitfalls to be avoided, and her skill in working with people.

After several months of careful study and planning, a community nursery school was opened. At first it was housed in a church and in the adjacent city park. The City Council provided funds needed for fencing and equipping an area in the park to be used by the pre-school children. Later it became necessary to use guest houses and backyards offered by parents, as interim housing while the association got underway with the building of its own nursery school.

The financing of the project was, and still is, on a cost sharing basis, supplemented by services provided by mothers, fathers, and interested association members. Most families are able to pay their share of the cost, others pay only part, and some pay nothing, or one dollar a month. The amount paid by each family is known only to the director, the school secretary, and the treasurer. A yearly allotment is made to the school from the Community Youth Fund, and a monthly contribution is made by a local Kiwanis Club. A series of money-raising activ-

ities, such as rummage sales, square dances and theatre parties, provide money for play equipment and maintenance.

A fund to pay for children who could not otherwise be enrolled comes from the sale of *A Nursery School Handbook for Teachers and Parents* published by the association.

Community interest in the plans for the new school was so great and the growth of the organization so rapid, that less than three years from the opening of the nursery school, and after enrollment had grown from 20 to 100 families, the new building was completed.

Finding Funds To Build

A contract was negotiated with the City Council, permitting a building to be erected on city-owned land. The National Guard volunteered to demolish an old building on the land and to clear the ground in preparation for building the nursery school.

Technical and artistic experts volunteered their help without pay. The architect, a father with four children under six years of age, designed the building in consultation from time to time with the director.

Labor for the plumbing, wiring, laying of asphalt tile, painting, and other jobs was donated by skilled persons in the community. The heating plant and the needed cement were donated. Many other materials were sold to the association at cost by local business firms. Fathers and other interested men did all of the construction under the supervision of a paid contractor.

Money was raised by: (1) voluntary contributions by parents and other interested citizens (2) money-raising activities; (3) house-to-house canvassing by mothers.

The Building Becomes Reality

The result of all this community activity is a modern building in a picturesque setting of large trees on a half-acre of land, surrounded by a stone wall. The 2,050 square feet of indoor play space can be divided into three rooms, by means of sliding partitions. Undivided, this room provides ample space for parent activities in the afternoons and evenings. The plans provide for another room which will have to be built before the rainy season. Double doors open upon two cement terraces, and four fenced yards provide play areas.

The color technician was a grandfather, who worked out wall colorings in shades of chartreuse to olive, designed to carry the eye to, and blend with, the coloring of the oak trees and the mountains beyond, seen through the large picture windows which reach to the floor. Utility with beauty characterizes every detail of the new building.

A local nursery has volunteered to landscape the grounds with a variety of appropriate shrubs as soon as proper planting seasons arrive.

Sponsors Are on the Job

The Sierra Madre Community Nursery School Association is a non-profit corporation, non-sectarian, and interracial. Its members are parents of the children enrolled and other interested persons. Members who are not parents pay dues of two dollars a year. Each member has one vote on the election of officers and association policies and operation.

Each year the membership elects a board of trustees consisting of 21 members, half of whom must be parents of the children enrolled. The other half are chosen from representative community groups. The city mayor is a trustee



Photo, Joe A. Hinojos, Sierra Madre, Calif.

and the professions of medicine, law, and teaching are represented. So also is business and labor.

An executive committee of eight persons is chosen from the board of trustees, and each of these is chairman of a standing committee, responsible for one of the various activities, such as finance, personnel policy, facilities, and membership. Each member of the association is expected to serve on a committee of his or her choice.

The association selects also an advisory board of outstanding educators who are responsible for determining the educational policies and for the selection of the school's director. The director selects and supervises teachers and other personnel.

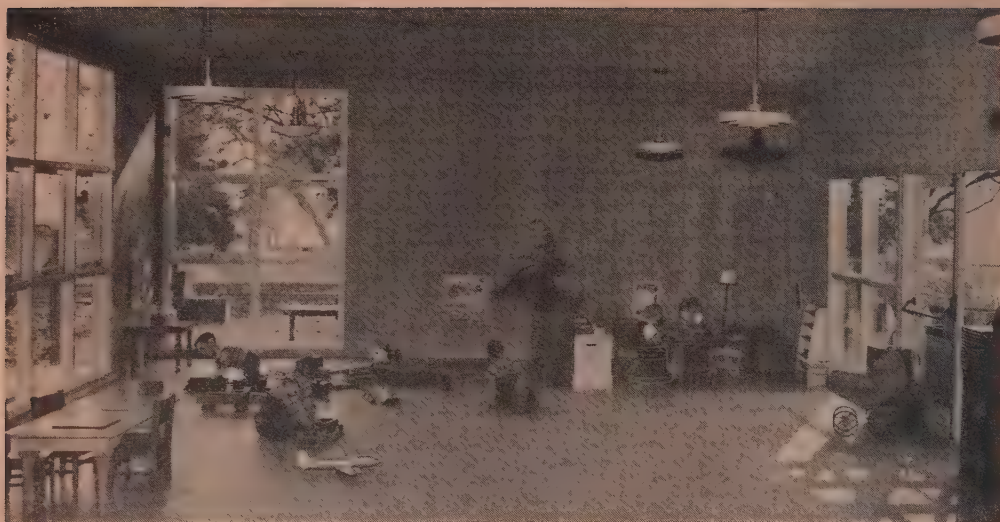
Since it is impossible to mention by name everyone who has made distinguished contributions to the organization, we should like at least to indicate these persons' versatile interest and talents as reflected by the jobs they hold.

One is a research engineer, another an investment analyst who negotiated with the City Council for the use of the public land and managed the financing and construction of the building, one is mayor of Sierra Madre, another is superintendent of Sierra Madre Schools, one is an accountant, and yet another an architect.

The School Staff

In addition to the director, the school employs three professionally trained teachers, one for each age group and a trained nurse.

The assistant teachers and the secretary are mothers who give their services in lieu of tuition. These mothers are, of course, carefully selected. Most of them already have excellent backgrounds for the work, and all are required to take the inservice training provided continuously by the director. They teach on a part-time basis, but since the majority of the children also come on a part-time schedule, this does not create a problem.



Photo, Joe A. Hinojos, Sierra Madre, Calif.

All fathers must attend "work days" once every three months.

Grown-Ups Are Learning Too

A planned program of educational, business, and social meetings is sponsored by the association. Educational meetings are financed and supervised by Pasadena City College extension division but are planned by the director. They take various forms—lectures, discussion groups, films, and staff meetings. Business meetings are conducted by the president of the association, and social affairs by special committees.

Much adult education also takes place through participation in the manifold activities in committees concerned with children's books, pamphlets for parents, musical instruments, nature materials, and construction of play equipment. The fathers have made cots, hollow blocks, play-house furniture, wooden animals, and have even done picture framing. They learn things they never knew about suitable equipment for different develop-

mental ages and the needs of growing children.

To secure and maintain the support and active cooperation of so many people, to keep them working together smoothly, to keep expenditures low, without sacrificing standards, all this requires leadership, intelligence, and goodwill of a high order—and selfless dedication to a project in which many people believe, mind and soul.

The Community Nursery School Association is also conscious of its responsibility to other community groups. Nursery school mothers volunteer to care for young children whose mothers participate in the Red Cross Blood Bank, or who act as volunteer counsellors in the summer day camp.

What Parents Say

"A friend of mine is buying a home here entirely because of what she had heard about the nursery school."

"My whole viewpoint on children, education, and family relationship has

been changed since joining the nursery school group."

"Our lives have been greatly enriched because of the knowledge we have gained and the fine friends we have made."

The Project's Values

The Sierra Madre community believes that the association herein described, and the program of nursery and adult education which it has sponsored, has yielded the following gains to the community and to nursery education:

1. Community acceptance of responsibility for the optimal physical, mental and emotional development of its pre-school children.
2. The acceptance by intelligent parents of responsibility for the well-being of all children in their community.
3. Training provided for parents acting as assistant teachers and helpers, which, like all sound training, provides learning by doing.
4. Helping parents to a philosophy of living with little children which carries over into home life, into later school life, into their church work and other community activities.
5. Involving fathers in activities with children in a way more scientific and realistic than they have known before.

6. Recognition and appreciation of nursery education by the public schools.

7. Opportunities for community education through:

- a. this new use of city owned land and a city owned building.
- b. representation of numerous community organizations on the Board of Trustees.
- c. a nursery school representative on the coordinating council.
- d. educational meetings of the association open to the public.
- e. wide circulation of books and pamphlets to many groups.
- f. an increasing number of citizens and passers-by who watch through the fence.
- g. addresses by the director at meetings of PTA and other civic groups.
- h. a handbook which is widely purchased by interested citizens and parents.

8. Enriched social life for parents. Many parents report that they did not know any one until they joined the association, and that now, through working and playing with others of like interests they have many friends.

9. Fast friendships formed by both children and parents which carry into school life.

10. Opportunities for mothers who were professional women before marriage—teachers, social workers, nurses, writers, and others—to give service and receive merited recognition in the work for which they were trained without jeopardizing their status or efficiency as wives and mothers.

The above article is one of a series on the Impact of Mobilization on Children. The Association for Childhood Education International is attempting to present one such article each month in CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. Each shows what has been done or can be done to overcome the problems arising from the impact of mobilization on children in the schools, the communities and the homes of our country.

Reprints of this article are available by writing to the Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St. N. W., Washington 5, D. C. Single copies may be had without charge; quantity prices on request.

WE WORK TOGETHER . . .



Courtesy, The Ohio State University, Columbus

- Throughout the School Years
 - In School Planning
 - In Meetings and Discussions

• Throughout the School Years

By HELEN BERTERMANN

All of us—parents and teachers as well as children—are capable of continuous growth. We make our most significant progress when we all work together. How growth through cooperative effort during the school year can come about is discussed by Helen Bertermann, principal, Central Fairmount and Theodore Roosevelt Schools, Cincinnati, Ohio.

CHILDREN ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES IN the school family who need help in achieving maturity, for there are stages of growth through which parents, teachers, and principals must pass throughout the years. Difficulties in helping children to achieve a well-adjusted maturity are increased when the adults in their lives are immature; conversely, they decrease when the adults are mature, adjusted persons.

The young parents with their first child, the beginning teacher, the beginning principal do not have the perception of their roles in guiding children properly balanced by experience. Their anxiety to act wisely often hinders them. Nor do any of the adults concerned with children achieve an adjusted maturity alone. An honest backward look by any adult over the years will emphasize that only by working together have any of us—child or adult—helped to achieve another level of growth:

What does a backward look in the life of a principal disclose to bear out such an assertion?

We Grow Together

There was Joe who arrived from a country school accompanied by a timid mother. He was placed in the fourth grade in the principal's mind as she approached them in the office, only to learn that Joe had had but fourteen

months in school. His watery eyes and cotton in his right ear indicated the need for a prompt visit to the school nurse.

Fortunately Joe's mother appreciated the efforts of the second grade teacher who had time, ability, and willingness to help him have satisfying experiences of adjustment to city life, to give him the necessary individual help, and to enlist the mother's cooperation in some simple work at home and the nurse's help in getting Joe to a clinic where for payment of a small fee he received medical attention.

Joyce's background in a well-to-do family provoked a different problem. Patient, understanding guidance of parents to arouse a steady interest in her affairs, not only occasional or whimsical, meant that the teachers and principal came in for some tongue lashings including, among other accusations, that of causing the mother to have a nervous breakdown. There emerged finally a pair of parents who realized that what happened to Joyce every day was important, that as a person she presented good company for them, and that she was much more to them than the recipient of a too-generous allowance or summers at expensive girls' camps. Some teachers and a principal emerged grateful for not wearying of so many seemingly unsatisfactory interviews, wiser for having met two parents who were able to

grow, and satisfied that Joyce was a happier girl.

Georgie and Mel with their parents were brought by police to the school in hopes that the school could help the boys find interests other than freight-car jumping. Another youngster, Gus, came alone, for his parents were—and remained—elusive, and because of this he faded out of the school picture. Child welfare authorities placed him in a foster farm home. Georgie's problem became less pronounced because he admired the physical education teacher and found in him a friend to whom he could confide what he did outside of school hours. Georgie developed skills as an athlete, which brought him the prestige he needed when he went on to high school.

The teachers had to work against parental opposition with Mel but accepted his outbursts of temper with more understanding after the police described his home. They worked hard to see that he had satisfying experiences in his school activities and relationships. He moved away when he was in the seventh grade, but the teachers and principal agreed that at least three of his years in school would provide pleasant memories, in spite of sordid fighting experiences outside of school.

A long spell of icy, sleety weather, which kept more children at school for lunch and inside the building, raised the question of caring for them, while at the same time giving the teachers the break they needed and deserved at noon. A long, frank discussion in the staff meeting brought out a schedule fairer to all. Amateur shows, dramatizations, singing and dancing, in addition to the usual noon-time game schedule, were introduced.

Noise—yes, plenty of it, but also grade committees setting up the lunch-

hour programs, teachers scheduling extended time for noon duty and sharing ideas and critical analysis of how the program was serving the needs of everyone concerned. Thus, a safer, happier time for children was made possible by joint staff planning.

We Strive to Meet Human Needs

The parade of cooperative action goes on: a school-wide planning session about the waste of paper towels and broken soap dispensers with a united attack by pupils, teachers, and custodial staff to emphasize good citizenship as more desirable than rules and policing; cooperation with a supervisor who saw potentialities in a timid, inadequately trained beginning teacher, helping her to find acceptance as a staff member and to be understood by parents, as well as strengthening teaching techniques; help for the mother who was over-protective of a kindergarten child, aiding her to see what was really good for her child; work with the visiting teacher helping a psycho-neurotic child have a good school home and helping the teachers, too, to feel free to air their gripes as they worked out one plan and then another to help the child.

Failures that come too frequently to permit growth of self complacency are in the picture to serve as reminders of what not to do or to try in a different way.

All of the problems that come the principal's way seem to be wrapped up in human beings trying to meet their needs. As the years pass, the firmer the conviction grows that help toward solution of problems and continuous growth, whether for children or adults, comes only through sharing, planning together, and trying again.

• In School Planning

By MARY ELLEN SINGSEN

Successful close collaboration between parents and teachers is a mark of increasing maturity among the two adult groups most concerned with our schools. How these groups may work together successfully on school planning is described by Mary Ellen Singsen, a parent in Winnetka, Illinois.

THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION IN Winnetka, Illinois, tries to enlist the services of every parent in the village each year. To a very real degree, this is being done. Even the fathers are working in the PTA. Fifty of them took part in a very successful fathers' night meeting at one of the elementary schools recently.

The school administration, the teachers, and the parents are closely tied together in the Central PTA Board, the coordinating parent-teacher agency of the four schools in the village. Headed by a father, it is composed of the superintendent of schools, the four principals, a representative of the Teachers's Council, the four PTA chairmen, and a chairman of each committee of the PTA who correlates the work of those holding corresponding positions in the local groups. This arrangement allows the Central Board to keep to the large topics in school planning and leaves the local problems to be solved in the branch associations.

In no way is an individual school hampered from carrying on its own programs. Quick action can be taken through this machinery for informing all parents of anything important, legislatively, for instance. It can also consider general problems in support of modern educational policy and practice. A few years ago the Central Board

financed a handbook of information for new parents about the school's philosophy and practices. The Board is currently planning to publish a new handbook. It also has a loan fund for teachers and has made itself responsible for finding housing for teachers new to Winnetka.

Parents Become Partners

Each of the four local PTA boards has about 20 percent of the mothers represented on it, for two chairmen from each classroom are included in the groups. Most of the rest of the parents are brought into the school to work on one committee or another, thus making possible close cooperation between parents and teachers. Room meetings (social studies group meetings at the junior high school level) are the result of teacher-room chairmen planning and all-parent participation in discussion of problems particular to an age.

PTA programs are planned jointly. Social activities connected with programs bring the groups together, and exhibits are dual ventures. Physical examinations are given and health records kept with the aid of parent volunteers. The safety committee works with administration, teachers, and police on such things as bicycle inspection and licensing.

The House and Grounds Committee of the PTA functions after group consideration of school needs. Both the weekly

mimeographed bulletins and the articles for the local weekly magazine are written by parents following consultation with teachers. Child study groups arranged by the PTA for parents make use of teachers as resource persons. Besides the occasions for social relationships of teachers and parents outside the school, there are opportunities for contacts of a social nature within the schools.

On a more intensive level, private parent-teacher conferences on the academic and social-emotional growth of each child in the school are held twice a year. Through these conferences the teachers gain more understanding of the home environment of their pupils and how parents feel about the education their children are receiving. A mother, in turn, has school practices interpreted to her along with information about her own child. It is a slow but very effective method of parent education. Parent opinion gathered in this close contact is material for a continuous evaluation of school methods.

Questions and Values

A policy of the schools is to welcome the parents to the school to observe and sometimes to help. One second grade used mothers in conducting small reading groups, to the advantage of both children and parents. On some occasions mothers help the teachers on excursions to museums and other places of interest.

At this time in Winnetka there seems to be a great deal of new interest in what is being taught in the schools. At one of the elementary schools, a parent group wants to discuss with the faculty and principal what community participation in the schools should be. These parents want to know how the goals in modern education can be measured against the old subject matter goals and

whether the schools are on the right track. They wonder if the school and community can agree on an American heritage which should be taught to children.

At the junior high school, the faculty has asked the PTA to select eight members to meet with eight teachers to talk over ways of bettering the general curriculum. They are asking for positive evaluation, not a recital of minor complaints. As a background for this work, each of the parent members of the committee is currently visiting all the classes in a chosen subject to inform herself on both methods and content of the teaching. The committee wants to find something concrete for teachers and parents to work on together. This group will later be enlarged.

Recently, a new organization was created in Winnetka called the Committee of 28. This committee, the outgrowth of the superintendent's faculty advisor group, is an organization for system-wide participation in the improvement of the Winnetka schools. Primarily composed of school people, it has six parent representatives: one from each of the elementary schools, one from the junior high school, one from the nursery school board, and one from the Board of Education.

Other representatives on the Committee of 28 have been elected from each of the groups working in the Winnetka schools. Winnetka's new superintendent of schools, Gilbert S. Willey, will serve as chairman ex-officio. An "opinionnaire" has been sent to each school employee and to each PTA group, asking what two or three problems concerning the schools are thought to be important for immediate study.

Many committees will be set up which will eventually use all members of the

school staff and representative parents in a continuous program of school system betterment. All these new groups indicate

the eagerness of the teachers to share their curricular planning, and of an interest in education on the part of the parents.

● In Meetings and Discussions

By PAULETTE HARTRICH

Where parents and teachers "talk out" troublesome problems, a major step has been taken toward solution of the problems and toward establishing understanding and respect among the participants. Paulette Hartrich, Association for Family living, Chicago, writes about the barriers to such an exchange and suggests how such obstacles may be overcome.

THE NEED FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS to work together toward a better understanding of each other and of the children they guide is widely recognized.

When there is no common ground of sympathy and understanding, teachers and parents often work at cross purposes. Neither is likely to consider the complete child, but the child's behavior at school becomes meaningful only in the light of his behavior at home, while his behavior at home is in turn affected by his adjustments to the school situation.

Into the new experiences outside of the home and into his relationships with his teachers and peers, the growing child projects the relationships he has had with the members of his own family. It is about this side of the child that the teacher may need additional information. The standards and goals of the family may be at sharp variance with those of the school. The conflicts between what the child learns at home and at school can only confuse and disturb him. Suspicion and antagonisms between parents

and teachers are quickly passed on to the child.

Clearing Away the Barriers

While they are intended to bring about a better understanding, individual meetings between parents and teachers often do just the contrary. Mrs. Smith comes to school to find out why Johnny is failing in arithmetic. Subtly, or not so subtly, she may imply that this is really the teacher's fault. The teacher naturally resents this questioning of her competence. When Mrs. Smith is called to school because Johnny won't settle down in class, she is likely to feel that her adequacy as a parent is being challenged. Because both parent and teacher are afraid of being blamed, each tries to fix blame, and neither one is any closer to understanding Johnny.

Other parents have never completely outgrown the feelings of awe that their own teachers inspired in them. Going to the principal's office may revive unhappy memories of being sent there.

Tense and ill at ease, these parents are likely to avoid the school.

Because they recognize the need to break down these barriers, teachers in many schools have encouraged not only individual but also group meetings. This is certainly a step in the right direction; for in group discussions, where numbers of people are involved, topics will be more general than the needs of any one individual child, and because of the reassurance to parents of being with other parents who have the same problems and the same interests, the atmosphere is likely to be friendly and relaxed. This, of course, does not negate the importance of individual interviews between parents and teachers but rather should serve to make them more effective by first establishing rapport between the home and the school.

When parents are invited to school for orientation programs where methods and curricula are explained, there is established an excellent atmosphere for a genuine exchange of ideas. This is the parents' opportunity to express their own feelings.

Establishing Rapport

Informal study or discussion groups constitute one of the most satisfactory ways to bring teachers and parents together. The success of this type of group depends upon each person feeling that his contribution is as important as that of any one else and on all the participants feeling a sense of belonging to the group. If the teachers come as "authorities" or remain isolated, there can be no real group feeling. Sometimes having an outside, trained discussion leader who represents neither parents or teachers exclusively will help to break down this barrier. A program of study involving the interests of both parents and teachers

is essential. When they can contribute to this program on an equal basis, rapport between parents and teachers is much more easily established.

Meetings should have continuity, for a group rarely learns to work and feel together in one or two sessions. And finally, meetings need to be planned in such a way that they are not a burden on a teacher who may already have a heavy schedule. Released time for faculty to meet with parents' groups should be recognized as being fully as important as any part of the school curriculum.

In a school group where parents and teachers discuss their mutual problems, satisfying results can be achieved. In a group both parents and teachers can find support for their views and are less inhibited about expressing them. The attitudes and feelings of parents and teachers—their standards and way of life—are brought out more clearly in group situations. The members of the group not only gain greater tolerance and acceptance of ideas other than their own but often gain a clearer insight into their own feelings and motivations. This last is particularly important for, after all, the feelings and attitudes of parents and teachers are far more important than what they do or what they teach.

Basic to our working together as equal partners is the building of mutual respect between teachers and parents. This may be achieved through discussion groups, where resentments and disagreements are aired openly and nearly always lay the basis for a subsequent better understanding and agreement. The opportunity to compare children's behavior at home and at school also gives the group a better picture of the child as a whole and helps them to see how they can most effectively meet children's needs.

I'm a Stranger Here Myself

Bess B. Lane, author and parent educator, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, helped introduce "Toward Maturity" in the September issue. In the present article she tells how some schools are welcoming new parents and interpreting the school program and policies to them.

"CAN YOU TELL ME HOW TO GET TO the assembly room?"

"I'm sorry I can't be of help. I'm a stranger here myself."

These remarks of two parents with children in the school were overheard one December morning in the corridor of the Oleander Street Public Elementary School. The school had been in session over three months and yet these parents new this year to the school didn't know their way around the building.

That incident set us to wondering about what is being done in this and other places by schools and parents' organizations to acquaint new parents not only with their school building but with the school's policies and practices. We found great variation in procedures. Some schools, some parents' organizations, do nothing. Others make a gesture. Still others take the matter seriously and succeed in making the new parents feel welcome, informed, and pleased that their children are pupils in the school and that they themselves are residents in the community.

Why Bother About the New Parent?

The following comments and questions, typical of those voiced by parents new to a community, give us an answer to the question, "Why bother with new parents?"

"Our apartment house was condemned and we had to move in July. I hated to

move. Our children had friends there and so did we. I hate to think of starting all over again—new school, new problems, new people. It takes so long to get acquainted and to make new friends."

"I was lonely in that community. The people there seemed to look down on a person born outside of this country. I'm glad we are in a new place. Here the attitude may be different."

"The school Kate has attended since she was five is so good, I'm prejudiced against any other. I doubt if I can pump up any interest in her new school."

"I'm all mixed up about what they call modern education. I hope someone in this new school will be able to straighten me out."

"I've never paid any attention to the school in our district but now that the twins are big enough to go to school I suppose I'll have to. What are you supposed to do if you have children in the school?"

"Is the PTA a kind of social organization? Or does it help parents or the school? Or what?"

"Jim hasn't gotten along very well in school for the past two years. I have a feeling that if we only knew how, we could be of greater help. Maybe the new school will take a real interest in Jim and in his parents too."

"The school in our community likes to use parents for all sorts of things. I like to paint and the school likes to have me come in and work with the children. I have enjoyed it a lot. I do hope that the school in the town to which we are moving can use my services."

What Some Schools And Parents' Organizations Have Done

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Prosser:

We are glad that Sadie is now a pupil in our school. We hope that she and you, too, will feel at home here. As soon as the school gets well under way, about the first of October, I hope that you will arrange to come to see me that we may get acquainted and talk over plans for Sadie's best progress. If before that time you have any questions, please let me know.

Cordially yours,
Fred Mason
Principal

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Freon:

School has been in session now for nearly a month. I begin to feel quite well acquainted with all the children and am eager to meet their parents, particularly the parents of those children who are new to the school. May I come to see you next Tuesday about 4:15? I wish to tell you some of Biff's successes in his work and in making friends. I wish also to hear about his home interests and activities.

You need not bother to write me. Just send word by Biff.

Sincerely yours,
Mary Frazer
Fourth-Grade Teacher

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Anderson:

I am president of the Fifth Grade. The class voted to invite all the children's

parents to visit us sometime. We are starting with the new parents as they don't know our school. Your turn comes on November 7. Can you come to visit us on that day?

Asy Lovett
Secretary to Fifth Grade

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Cooper:

The Parent-Teacher Association of the Wilder School is inviting all the new parents to have a cup of coffee with the members of the Executive Board of the PTA on Wednesday, October 15, at 5:00 o'clock. We set the hour late so that fathers too can come. We hope to meet you at that time. We want you to feel at home in your new school and new community.

Sincerely yours,
Flora Stassen
President

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Foster:

We are planning a tour of the school building and grounds for all new parents on Monday, September 28, at 3:15 P.M. Won't you join us? Beginning October first, we hope you will attend our assemblies, visit our classrooms, and join us in many other school activities. This tour will help you find your way around. After the tour we will have a snack in the library and discuss what we have seen.

Cordially yours,
Vivian Froelicher
Principal

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Spragel:

At the last meeting of the Executive Board of the Home-School Association it was decided to hold a series of four meetings to discuss the policy and program of the school and of the parents' organization. These meetings are being

planned particularly for new parents but others may (and will) attend.

We hope you will be able to come to these meetings, hear what we are doing, and give us the benefit of your experience in other schools. You will find the dates and hours of these meetings on the enclosed card.

Yours sincerely

Mather Graham

President of Executive Board

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Steinhoff:

In our school we have what is called the class-parent program. That means that the parents of each group meet from time to time to hear about the work being done in the particular class and to ask questions, make suggestions or to present problems.

The teacher and parents of your child's group (Four M) will meet at 7:30 P.M., October 11, in your child's classroom. Since you are new to the community, Mr. and Mrs. Radnor, neighbors of

yours, will call for you about 7:15. We hope that you can arrange to come.

Sincerely yours,

Ada Conover

Chairman, PTA Committee

These friendly acts of these friendly schools and parents' organizations have far-reaching affects, don't they? For the new parents they mean less loneliness, greater faith in their school, quicker adjustment to a new community, and greater willingness to give of their best to their new school and community.

For the children these friendly acts mean a security that might take months to bring about in other ways. For the school and parents' organization they mean added resources in friendliness and good will. They mean new ideas and additional material help. Those principals, teachers and parents who help in these neighborly ways help three—themselves, the new citizens in their midst and the community of which they are all a part.

A STUDY CONFERENCE, LIKE A SCHOOL ROOM, NEEDS A PLAN, BUT IT must be a flexible plan that leaves the individual free. Democracy is planning for the common good with care not to curtail another's freedom. People working together can achieve far greater things than any individual alone.—LAURA ZIRBES, 1951, *ACEI Study Conference, Seattle, Washington*.

The ACEI 1951 Conference

Reported by CONSTANCE CARR

ONE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED FORTY-eight people registered for the ACEI Conference held in Seattle, Washington, March 26-30. The theme "Living With Children in Today's World" permeated the whole conference organized around five general sessions, eleven branch forums, two exploration afternoons and forty-one study groups. Every moment seemed to be filled with committee meetings and interest groups working for better understanding of the association's work and promoting its future activities.

Seattle and the cooperating branches of the state of Washington, British Columbia and Oregon proved to be the most gracious of hosts and hostesses. It was evident that much pre-planning, group cooperation and participation had gone into making this conference one long to remember.

Each of the general sessions provided real inspiration for the members. The first general session on Monday morning brought Laura Zirbes to the rostrum "pinch hitting" for L. Thomas Hopkins. Miss Zirbes started us off with the topic "How People Work Together." The ideas of individual growth through participation in group action were of value to carry home to our groups and of real use in the study group situations.

Monday evening was Northwest night. Erna Gunther, Washington State Museum, Seattle, provided us with a background for understanding the "Heritage of the Northwest." Pearl Wanamaker of the Washington State Department of Education spoke on "Opportunities for Children in the Northwest."

The Association for Childhood Education had truly its "international" flavor with fifty-three registrants representing fourteen countries taking part in the study groups, committee meetings and branch forums. These people were the guests of honor at the Tuesday evening general session. Delbert Oberteuffer of The Ohio State University provoked our thinking and our concern for action about the mental health of "Children in Today's

World." Then Grady Gammage of Arizona State Teachers College expanded our horizons with his talk on "Children Around the World."

Winifred Bain, president, Wheelock College, gave a stimulating address on "Action for Children" at the general session held Wednesday evening. The address was followed by the presentation of the 1951-1953 ACEI Plan of Action which included the six resolutions adopted at the final general session and the suggestions for action developed in branch forums on Tuesday afternoon.

The Thursday morning meeting was a business session with reports of progress on "ACEI in Today's World," a general review of committee work, a report on UNESCO and childhood education, an announcement of the CARE-UNESCO children's book program and a special presentation of plans of the Committee for Cooperative Research. The new officers of the Association were introduced and received with appreciation (see page 433). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was announced as the place for the 1952 conference.

Thursday evening's program included a special treat. Roger Ernesti, an anthropologist and teacher at Mukilteo, Washington, with Gloria Wiggers presented Northwest Indian Dances in authentic costume.

Following the dances, background lecturers for the study groups, Winifred Bain representing the branch forums, and Myra Woodruff as leader, presented the summary panel. This proved a fitting and important conclusion to ACEI's 1951 Study Conference.

Study Groups

Members of the forty-one study groups were all enthusiastic about their work together. Before each work session they met as larger groups for a background lecture.

James L. Hymes, Jr., George Peabody College for Teachers, presented material to

the groups interested in "The Child—Why He Is That Way." Bess Goodykoontz, of the Office of Education, FSA, presented material on "Social Impacts—Children Need Help in Meeting the Impact of Today's World." Jean Betzner, Teachers College, Columbia University, developed the theme "Relationships—We Learn to Live Together." "Guidance—Children Need Adults" was well covered by Faith Smither of the State Department of California. Alice Miel of Teachers College, Columbia University, prepared the group for understanding of "The Curriculum—The Child Becomes Acquainted with His World—Uses It, Serves It." Laura Zirbes of the Ohio State University interpreted the need and use of "Research the Perpetual Quest."

The Adventure Area

The Adventure Area was a "must" on every conference member's program. Situated in one of the hotel ballrooms it offered much opportunity to explore in the realm of materials for children. At the entrance was a most intriguing case with the question "What can you find to show changes in the story of elementary education?" Children's books and toys covering many years were on display. These were loaned by Helen Reynolds, Seattle.

In one of the alcoves of the adventure area, ACEI branch yearbooks, publicity books and posters were displayed. It was a wonderful place to get new ideas for local groups.

In another alcove recent publications of cooperating organizations and agencies were displayed. There registrants became acquainted with some of the helpful materials of other groups who were concerned for children.

The ACEI publications corner proved a

popular spot. Here members and non-members looked over bulletins—both new and old—and copies of CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. Some people purchased bulletins; others became "new subscribers" to CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

The Functional Display not only attracted the conference registrants but Seattle parents as well. Seventy-one manufacturers and publishers displayed materials and books that had been tested in ACEI test centers. There were art materials, toys, tools, musical instruments and recordings.

Another attractive feature of the Adventure Area was the display of children's art brought from Japan and Korea by Laura Hooper of the University of Pennsylvania. Also included were Japanese picture books for children.

Interesting excursions and visits to school buildings were enjoyed by many. The Seattle Public Schools opened three elementary buildings to visitors. One represented a school in an industrial area where many nationalities meet. Another was Seattle's answer to the problem of changing centers of population—the transportable units. The third represented the newest in school architecture and equipment. One of the enjoyable features was the children's art work on display in each of the buildings.

A full report of the conference has been published in the April *Branch Exchange* which was mailed to all branch officers, conference registrants and international members. It may be obtained by others from ACEI headquarters office, 1200 Fifteenth Street N. W., Washington 5, D. C. for \$1 a copy.

START SAVING YOUR PENNIES FOR PHILADELPHIA!

1952 ACEI Study Conference

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

April 14-18

NANE Biennial Conference

Reported by FRANCES MAYFARTH

MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND STUDENTS, teachers, administrators and representatives from lay and other professional groups attended the 1951 Biennial Conference of the National Association for Nursery Education held in New York City March 7-10. The theme for the conference "These Years: Children's Opportunities and Our Responsibilities" was discussed in three general sessions, forty discussion groups, and eleven resource centers. Conference participants were unanimous in their praise of the program and its wide implications for the better education of young children.

Two major addresses were presented at the first general session: "Public Education's Responsibility to Young Children" by Earl McGrath, U. S. Commissioner of Education and Lawrence K. Frank's address on the conference theme.

A unique feature of the program was the eleven resource centers, set up to meet individual and group needs of the conference participants. As questions arose in the discussion groups, liaison people helped the questioners to find information and help in the centers. Each center had a planned program of activities in these areas: the selection, education and qualifications of teachers of young children; approaches in parent and family life education; education of young children throughout the world; physical facilities for the education of young children; public relations and legislation; practices and trends in child health; policies and administration of nursery centers; good programs for young children; mental health and child guidance; creative arts; and day care and extended school services during the period of mobilization. Through consultants, films, field trips, workshops, demonstrations, special sessions, exhibits and publications, the resource centers performed heroic tasks of bringing together materials and sources of information never before so completely assembled.

The second general session demonstrated discussion techniques with large groups fol-

lowing common orientation through an American Theatre Wing play, "The Universal Heckler" by Olga Druce.

Another high spot was the panel on research to which Barbara Biber, Leah Leavinger, Ashley Montagu, and Lois Murphy contributed. The large attendance and sustained interest at this meeting gave evidence of the deep interest in research and how to make it functional in the education of young children.

Ira Reid who spoke at the closing luncheon meeting pointed out that we give too little attention to the role of the child in our culture. "Children must become important as people if our culture is to survive," he said. He quoted Toynbee as saying that the apathetic fallacy of our times is the tendency to treat dynamic individuals as if they were things. "We capsule people into a 'thing' to be healthy, to be educated, no matter what they are as human beings. It is the right of children and the responsibility of society to see that the child grows to man's estate physically and socially and has the opportunity to live and act like a man while he is so doing."

James Hymes concluded the luncheon session with "A Look at Us," in which he pointed out "the two old continuing notes, deep in meaning, that are a part of us who work with young children": concern for people as people—man's humanity to man, and concern for the family.

OUR AMERICAN SOCIETY IS BECOMING MORE aware of the importance of its children. It is finding out how to meet their needs better. It is questioning the adequacy of services for all children. Families as a social invention to be strengthened and children as people are becoming deepening concerns for more and more citizens. Through its 1951 Biennial Conference the National Association for Nursery Education has deepened the awareness, defined the services, clarified the problems and integrated the concerns.

NEWS and REVIEWS

News HERE and THERE . .

By MARY E. LEEPER

Paula Assenheimer

Paula Assenheimer of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, secretary-treasurer of the Association for Childhood Education International, passed away on March 9, 1951, after a brief illness.

Miss Assenheimer was a much beloved kindergarten teacher in the public schools of Milwaukee, the city in which she was born. An active member of many educational groups, she demonstrated her leadership qualities as she worked in the Milwaukee County ACE and as president of the Wisconsin ACE. Louise Alder, one of her teachers and a former secretary-treasurer of ACEI writes:

I can't begin to tell you how Paula will be missed. She loved and understood people and reached out to them with such warmth and friendliness that she endeared herself to them. Her beautiful spirit contributed toward her great success as a leader.

Her unfailing good cheer, her faith in herself and in others, her imagination and vision, her courage in the presence of difficult and perplexing situations, her willingness to assume responsibility and her ability to see through whatever she undertook in a fine, self-forgetful way—all these qualities made her a wonderful leader.

Fellow Board members of ACEI learned with deep sorrow of Paula Assenheimer's passing. All were looking forward to meeting her in Seattle. At the opening session of the ACEI conference on March 28 tribute was paid to her life and work by a period of silent meditation.

Nora Herrick Millspaugh

On July 22, 1950, Nora Herrick Millspaugh of Los Angeles, California, closed the door on ninety-three years of living and on fifty-nine years of continuous service as a teacher of young children. She will long be remembered as a friend to children and as an active worker in the local and state Association for Childhood Education.

New ACE Branches

Desert Association for Childhood Education, California

Northwest Missouri Association for Childhood Education, Maryville, Missouri
Yakima Association for Childhood Education, Washington

National Conference on Physical Education

A group of some fifty persons invited from all sections of the country, representing fifteen agencies that work with children, recreation leaders, parents, classroom teachers, physical education instructors, supervisors, superintendents met together in Washington, D. C., on January 10-17, 1951. The purpose was to compile a report that would serve as a guide to administrators, teachers, school-board members, parents, members of service and city clubs, and others concerned with the planning of the physical education program. General headings of this report are:

The growth and developmental characteristics and needs of children of elementary-school age.

The general contribution of physical education activity to total child growth and development.

Fundamental principles upon which a desirable physical education program may be built.

Suggested program of physical education activities for the use of all agencies concerned with meeting the needs of children.

School and community relationships and responsibilities.

Means of implementation of the program in local situations.

ACEI was represented on the planning committee for this conference by Epsie Young, Austin, Texas. Dorothy Cadwallader of Trenton, New Jersey, represented the Association in the January conference.

Annual Report on Australian Pre-school Education

The 1950 report on pre-school education in Australia is being distributed by G. E. Pendred, Federal Office of Education. In transmitting this mimeographed report of forty-five pages Mr. Pendred says:

For some time the need for an overall picture of pre-school work in Australia has been felt. Information in this report is still far from complete but it is hoped that this first attempt will be of value to those engaged in pre-school administration.

The Australian Association for Pre-School Child Development that compiled the report was formed in 1938 when a meeting of representatives from the kindergarten unions of each state met to form a federal organization.

In addition to being responsible for the administration of the Lady Gowrie Child Centers, the work of the Australian Association has been to coordinate the work of the six kindergarten unions; to set standards for the guidance of young children in nursery-kindergartens and play centers; to set standards for the training of teachers; to organize a conference biennially; to publish *Parents' News Sheets* (twelve a year).

ACEI Officers 1951-52

Three new officers were elected for terms of two years each by delegates attending the 1951 study conference of the Association for Childhood Education International in Seattle, Washington, in March.

HELEN ANNE BERTERMANN of Cincinnati, Ohio, is the new president. Miss Bertermann is well known to ACEI members, having served as secretary-treasurer in 1942-1944, and as chairman of the local conference committee when the Association met in Cincinnati in 1938.

Miss Bertermann is an active member of the Cincinnati Council for Childhood Education and the Ohio ACE. She holds membership in the National Education Association, the Department of Elementary School Principals, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development



Helen Bertermann

and other organizations. Miss Bertermann is the principal of two elementary schools in Cincinnati—Central Fairmount and the Theodore Roosevelt.

student teachers in the nursery school of the elementary school in the University of California at Los Angeles. Miss Ludlum holds membership in many organizations including the National Association for Nursery Education and the Association for Nursery Education of Southern California. She is a life member of ACEI and active in Association work in the Pacific Coast region. Her hobbies include collecting musical instruments, children's books and pictures.



Blanche Ludlum

BERNICE NASH, the newly elected vice president representing kindergarten education, is a kindergarten teacher in the public schools of Lawrence, Kansas. In recent summers she has taught in the laboratory school of the Kansas State Teachers College at Emporia.

Several years ago Miss Nash served as president of the Kansas ACE and was the first chairman of the ACE workshop held at the University of Kansas.




Bernice Nash

Continuing as members of ACEI's Executive Board until April 1952 are:

- Epsie Young, public schools, Austin, Texas, representing intermediate education
- Laura Hooper, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, representing primary education
- Florence Kelly, public schools, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, secretary-treasurer

Miss Kelly was appointed by the Executive Board to complete the term of office of Paula Assenheimer.



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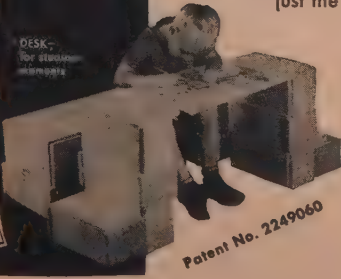
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Books for CHILDREN . . .

Editor, LELAND B. JACOBS

Heroes can make fiction memorable. What a distinguished company for children *Jo Marsh, Huck Finn, Alice, Mole, Long John Silver, Peter Rabbit, the Peterkins, and Pinocchio* continue to be year after year. In their reading of fiction children seek personages of import with whom they can identify. In good fiction for children there is almost always a strong main character who is so approachable that he early takes the reader in hand and leads him through the plot of the story. The hero is so companionable that he constantly accompanies the reader and encourages the eyes of the young mind to move eagerly ahead. Because of the hero, the story has relevance, balance, integrity, and beauty. The wise guide of young readers keeps a sharp watch for fiction that begins with a fine, live character, to whom problems come and through whom problems are solved.

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS. By *Quentin Reynolds*. Illustrated by *Jacob Landau*. New York: Random House, 457 Madison Ave., 1950. Pp. 183. \$1.50. Orville and Wilbur Wright exemplify the inventive mind at work. From the time that, as youngsters, they designed and made a new kind of sled that sped faster and steered more accurately to the construction of gliders and, finally, the first airplane, these two Americans creatively turned ideas into realities. Quentin Reynolds tells the Wright brothers' story well, skillfully showing the influence of family and community living in the total development of their accomplishments. The role that their mother played is particularly aptly presented.

To tell Orville and Wilbur Wright's story for children in the later-elementary grades, the writer has selected dramatic events and episodes, in chronological sequence, that point up the spirit of their thinking as well as their accomplishments. It is this approach that makes the boys and their family seem so very much alive. Because Reynolds tells his story simply and sincerely, the inspirational quality of the book emerges from the ventures and achievements of the humanly portrayed heroes rather than from asserted

aggrandizement by the author. Greatness of character emerges from activity rather than from an author's preachments.

THE HOMEMADE YEAR. By *Mildred Lawrence*. Illustrated by *Susanne Suba*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 383 Madison Ave., 1950. Pp. 217. \$2.25. Vicky is a well-balanced, capable, spirited child who must spend a year on her aunt's heavily mortgaged Pennsylvania farm. At first she is lost and uncertain in an environment where one must bake, churn, pick cherries, feed the cattle, and make hay. But by being intelligent and creative, Vicky not only learns to be a helpful worker. She also creatively finds ways to add zest and pleasure and profit for her relatives and the people of the neighborhood.

For this book Mildred Lawrence has created a group of people who have flesh and blood. Genuinely wholesome people live in this story. Vicky will make a lively companion for girls in the later-elementary grades.

Susanne Suba's line drawings seem just right for this story, for they too are refreshingly direct in their interpretation of Vicky's homemade experiences.

PIPPI LONGSTOCKING. By *Astrid Lindgren*. Translated by *Florence Lamborn*. Illustrated by *Louis S. Glanzman*. New York: Viking Press, 18 East 48th St., 1950. Pp. 158. \$2. Such a unique hoyden is that

nine-year-old Pippi Longstocking, who gallops, climbs, and figures her zany way through the rollicking pages of this book! Pippi's suitcase full of gold pieces makes her financially independent. She lives alone—except, of course, for a monkey and a horse—in an old house on the edge of a small Swedish village. Her only real friends, Tommy and Annika, are normal literal-minded children who find Pippi's company excitingly novel. Pippi on a picnic, in school, at a circus, or at a fire is just herself, which makes her markedly different from everyone else present.

Good nonsense must make nonsensical sense. It must be rooted in its own original conventions. It must be true to the nature of the unconventional characters that are brought alive. From this point of view Pippi is entirely credible and in a modern idiom. That one does not meet such a fabulous nine-year-old every day is probably fortunate. But not to know a few well-chosen Pippis, Homer

Prices, Mary Poppins, or Elmer Elevators when you are in the middle grades of the elementary school—what a pity!

UNCLE SYLVESTER. By Joan Howard. Illustrated by Garry MacKenzie. New York: Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth Ave., 1950. Pp. 48. \$1.50. Uncle Sylvester was really a mole of distinction. He observed that his island mole community was rapidly being endangered by the swift-flowing river. He called an emergency meeting of all the moles to lay the problem before them. He, with the aid of his ingenious nephew Digger and many large mushrooms, led the migration of the whole colony to the big green forest across the river. And for his distinctive service, Uncle Sylvester gained the added prestige of becoming first mayor of the new colony in the Green Forest.

Uncle Sylvester is a delightful character, as refined, cultured, and ingenious a mole as you will meet outside *Wind in the Willows*. He maintains his dignity and decorum always, which makes the hilarity of this new beast tale the more enjoyable.

Garry MacKenzie's pen-and-ink drawings have splendidly caught the mood of this funny escapade.

PETUNIA. By Roger Duvoisin. Illustrated by the author. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 501 Madison Ave., 1950. Pp. 27. \$1.50. This silly goose, Petunia, thought that possession of a book made for learnedness. After Petunia had found a book in the meadow, she set herself up as counsellor, guide, and arbiter for all the other animals, with disastrous results. Petunia became a busybody, rather than a help, to the extent that she almost exterminated the entire farm yard. Through this sad experience Petunia made a great discovery: "Now I understand. It was not enough to carry wisdom under my wing. I must put it in my mind and in my heart. And to do that I must learn to read."

What makes *Petunia* an engaging book is not its text so much as its pictures. The artist has outstripped the author. There are several pictures of Petunia that ate among the most charming art work of this publishing season. The text seems tinged with moralizing, but the pictures escape this pitfall and give Petunia distinction.

JOHNNY TEXAS. By Carol Hoff. Illustrated by Bob Meyers. Chicago: Wilcox and Follett Co., 1255 S. Wabash Ave., 1950. Pp. 150. \$2.75. No sooner had ten-year-old

Johann arrived in Texas with his family from Germany than a friendly, big stage-coach driver renamed him "Johnny Texas." From that moment on Johnny knew that he would love the vast, strange land to which his father had brought him. Even when a rattle-snake threatened the life of his baby sister, or when fighting with the Mexicans made them leave their farm, or when his father was reported dead in the wars, Johnny went on believing in this beautiful new land and the freedom that it gave him.

Johnny's excitement in exploring his new home, his role in sharing in family problems and happinesses, his problems rising to the challenge of being the man of the house, his persistence in helping Mama to understand the new life capture the reader's imagination and sympathy.

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Books for Teachers . . .

Editor, RUTH G. STRICKLAND

STUDENT TEACHING IN THE ELEMEN-

TARY SCHOOL. By James B. Burr, Lowry W. Harding, and Leland B. Jacobs. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 35 West 32nd St., 1950. Pp. 440. \$3.75. Student teaching forms the apex of the whole pre-service education triangle in modern teacher training. Here is a book which is an outgrowth of experience in supervising student teaching in all kinds of schools and deals with the actual problems that students have recognized as most important in learning to be effective, competent and creative teachers. It analyzes the entire process of student growth through observation and participation to many aspects of responsible teaching.

The sections of the book which deal with developing an educative environment and guiding children in self-discipline break down the total program into understandable elements and offer definite suggestions and guidance in carrying through and evaluating a practical program for children. The section on guiding group work offers concrete help which is of unusual value in analyzing the possibilities and problems of various forms of group work. Principles are stated and clearly explained and actual steps in the procedure are examined, evaluated and illustrated.

The young teacher is considered not only as a classroom worker but also as an active participant in all of the life of the school and the community. Conferences and how to make the most of them receives careful and constructive treatment. Human relations, from those with the critic teacher and children to relationships with the principal, parents, and the public, are given the importance and the wholesome emphases they deserve in any analysis of good teaching.

While the book is designed especially for student teachers, it would be helpful reading for principals, supervisors and teachers as well. Classroom teachers who would like to move from more conservative academic teaching to teaching which better fits the present day concept of good learning experience for boys and girls will find this book a rich

source for help. Beginning teachers will find themselves referring to it again and again for its wealth of practical suggestions.—R.G.S.

LIVING IN THE KINDERGARTEN. By

Clarice D. Wills and William H. Stegeman. Chicago, Ill.: Follett Publishing Co., 1257

S. Wabash Ave., 1950. Pp. 374. \$4.12. Each year many more kindergartens are being opened for the first time. More books dealing with the needs of five-year-old children and the type of programs which will best meet their needs are in demand. The authors of *Living in the Kindergarten*, each with a different experiential background of work with children, have endeavored to place in the hands of teachers a practical handbook of modern ideas and practices with which they are familiar and which have proved successful in many kindergartens.

The book is written in a fluent, flowing style which must be read carefully and in its entirety to give the right emphasis to its authors' philosophy of child development and training. The kindergarten child, what is he like, is the theme of the first section. Here is a good sound description of the child of five; his possible adjustment problems, his basic emotional reactions and factors which will influence his experiences, physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally. This is followed by a detailed description of the curricula in kindergartens. Procedures and practices are presented with a positive inflection leaving little opportunity for initiative or for another point of view though there may be disagreement as to some of them.

The short section on parents contains some of the most vital informative material in the book. The case study approach is clearly and poignantly simple, and yet most effective in showing that "parents too are different. Security in the home is the basic need of all children and from that comes growth in circling patterns of associations leading to the most effective parent-child-teacher relationships.

Last, and we wonder at the arrangement, is the brief section devoted to the kindergarten teacher who holds such a vital place in the success of any kindergarten. The book is generously illustrated with photographs of young children by Albert W. Niemela of Salem, Oregon.—Reviewed by NANCY NUNNALLY, instructor and critic teacher in kindergarten, Indiana University, Bloomington.

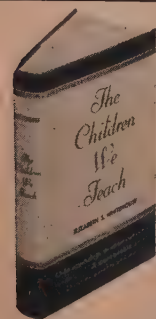
READINESS FOR SCHOOL BEGINNERS.

By Gertrude Hildreth. *Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1950. Pp. 382. \$3.60.* How fortunate to have a book full of practical suggestions for guiding children through the early primary years all written from the child development point of view! When we are needing so many additional teachers of beginners, and when we need present teachers to obtain this broader point of view, a book full of implementation serves a real need.

Every phase of the curriculum is included. The often omitted parent education interspersed throughout the text, should clarify the thinking of the experienced teacher and guide the young teacher.

Maturity, however, is a term used in this book as in other recently written books with some license. Certain attributes are attached to maturity which may or may not obtain. Lack of what is evidently called a step toward maturity does not infallibly produce results stated. This is especially true of the social and emotional phases. Perhaps this is because the instruments we use for understanding are still crude.

The breadth of readiness with its developmental aspects is well stated and suggestions for procedures are practical. It is especially worthwhile to find reading, arithmetic, handwriting, and spelling, all treated from the readiness aspect within the pages of one book. The two hundred item bibliography at the end of the book should provide additional help.—Reviewed by MARGARET MERCILLE, instructor and critic teacher of first-grade, Indiana University, Bloomington.



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Bulletins and Pamphlets

Editor, CELIA BURNS STENDLER

BETTER THAN RATING—New Approaches to Appraisal of Teaching Services. Prepared by Commission on Teacher Evaluation. Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, National Education Association. 1201 16th St., N. W. Pp. 83. \$1.25. Increase in the use of teacher-rating schemes these last few years has given rise to serious consideration on the part of those interested in good education as to desirable and efficient means of improving educational programs. We know we want better schools, we know good teachers are the key to better schools, but whether we can have better teachers as a result of rating has been questioned by many.

This thought-provoking pamphlet will help many teachers and administrators in analyzing some of the issues involved. What the committee does is to examine first how

teachers accomplish best results. Three major principles of democracy are set up which have definite implications for the administration of education, including rating of teachers. The authors recognize that "behavior is changed most rapidly and satisfactorily when people are engaged in activities designed to attain *their own purposes*—not purposes set up for them by others." This means that a system of *cooperative* evaluation is necessary, involving the planning by all concerned in the process of group goals, and the planning of techniques for measuring change in behaviour. Various rating plans and the effects of these upon the school program are analyzed. Then a comprehensive program of educational appraisal is discussed. The writing committee feels that no single plan has yet been devised for evaluating our school programs, and that it is the job of every school community to study its situation and evolve a plan to meet its own peculiar needs. Some factors to be kept in mind by school community councils as they work toward a plan of cooperative evaluation are included.

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and clearly written that it makes a very convincing document.

SCIENCE EDUCATION. *Volume 34, Number 4, October 1950. Albany, N. Y.: 374 Broadway. Pp. 66. \$1.* This issue of *Science, Education* is devoted to elementary science and covers a wide range of topics. Among others are included a paper on teaching materials for elementary science, first grade concepts of the moon, a description of health activities in an elementary school, a report on a study of radio, and several articles on teacher education in the field of science. The articles are not consistently good but there may be enough of value in the issue to call attention to it. An extensive book review section of new materials in science is appended.

KEEPING READING PROGRAMS ABREAST OF THE TIMES. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading, 1950. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 5750 Ellis Ave. Pp. 247. \$2.90.* The 1950 Conference on Reading had two purposes in

mind "to consider the types of changes needed in the light of recent educational and social developments and the results of research, and to study specific ways of modifying school practices in harmony with such developments." The conference set about to accomplish these ambitious purposes by presenting 50 papers related to 22 different topics.

Obviously the lengthy number of topics necessitated that many of them be very short. Some of them are too short for adequate treatment of the problem; some of them cover old, too familiar territory and might have been better omitted. Nevertheless if the reader will be choosy, he can find a considerable body of current material which is excellent and which will be valuable to the classroom teacher and to others concerned with the teaching of reading.

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Films Seen and Liked...

Editors, ESTHER ASCHEMEYER
and ALBERTA MEYER

MAPS AND THEIR MEANING. *Produced by Academy Films, Box 3088, Hollywood, Calif. 1950. Collaborator and commentator: Walter Wittich, University of Wisconsin. Color, \$115; rent \$7. Sound. For grades five through high school.* The film explains the meaning of the conventional hysometric color scheme used on physical maps. A physical map of North America on which elevations are depicted by colors is introduced. Diagrams are used to interpret the meaning of the colors used to represent elevations above and below sea level. The geographic landscapes are then visualized by many beautiful scenes in the various physical regions in the United States. The additional factors of latitude and climate are introduced and their significance in determining the landscape is brought out. The pacing and vocabulary of the script are excellent.—E.A.

NILE RIVER VALLEY AND THE PEOPLE OF THE LOWER RIVER. *Produced by Academy Films, Box 3088, Hollywood, Calif., 1950. Collaborator: Dr. Hagopian. Black and white, \$65.50; rent \$5. Color, \$130; rent \$8. Sound. 17 min. For grades five through twelve.* By means of beautiful photography and easily interpreted maps, the course of the Nile River is traced from the confluence of the Blue Nile and White Nile rivers down to the Mediterranean Sea. The various regions through which the river flows are shown. The land use which is made possible in an arid land because of the cycle of the Nile and man's harnessing of the river is beautifully depicted. Excellent shots of well sweeps and other primitive irrigation devices as well as familiar historic structures are shown.—E.A.

INTRODUCTION TO FRACTIONS. *Produced by Jam Handy, 2821 E. Grand Blvd., Detroit, Mich., 1950. Color, \$19.50 per set of 5 film-strips. 111 frames. For intermediate.* This series uses life-like situations to introduce the following concepts: fractional parts of a whole and of groups; non-unit fractions of whole and of groups;

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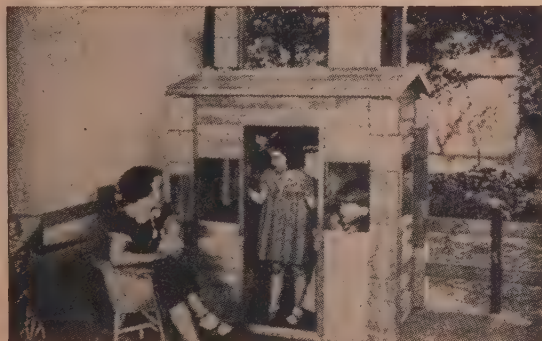
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comparison of fractions. Artists' drawings rather than photographs are used. Two children who appear in each filmstrip help to give continuity to the series. There is a carefully worked out step-by-step development and pupil participation is encouraged. The filmstrips would be equally useful for introducing the above concepts or for reviewing them. The illustrations, however, could be duplicated in the classroom by any competent teacher. Since a visual aid should help the teacher do more than she can do without it, this may be considered a weakness of the series.—A.M.

ANIMALS IN WINTER. *Produced by Encyclopedia Britannica Films, Inc., 1150 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Ill. Black and white, \$50. Sound. 11 min. For kindergarten and primary.* Youngsters will enjoy seeing these animals in action: badger, chipmunk, caterpillar, snowshoe rabbit, porcupine, bobcat, and bluejay. In addition, they will learn that these animals prepare for winter by changing and adapting themselves

in various ways. They will understand a little better that animals are mutually interdependent, and will appreciate the struggle for survival. The film is characterized by excellent photography, well-paced narration and a good summary.—A.M.

POND LIFE. *Produced by Encyclopedia Britannica Films, Inc. Black and white, \$50. 11 min. Sound. For intermediate, junior and senior high, college and adult.* By means of excellent under-water photography this film shows in a most interesting way the life of a pond: waterplants, fish, crayfish, snails, a painted turtle, whirl beetles, water striders, mosquito larvae and others. The inter-relationships between plants and animals, as well as between the various forms of animal life, are emphasized. The film also points out that all this life is dependent upon certain conditions within the pond and around its shores. One is impressed by the great variety of animal life portrayed. Although primarily useful to science classes, the film is also of general interest.—A.M.



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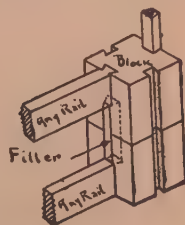
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